



WORLD RELIGIONS SYLLABUS FALL 2004

Reference #s & Meeting Times: 198071 (MWF 11:00-11:50 am), 198072 (M nights 6-9:15 pm), & 198070 (TZ 11-12:15 pm)

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10:00-11:00 A.M. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays

2:00-3:00 P.M. on Tuesdays and Thursdays

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SYLLABUS

*For the official course description as per the college catalog go to:

<http://www1.fccj.org/curriculum/>

*Prerequisites for this course are English Composition classes.

You have chosen an exciting field for exploration. The wisdom traditions we will study are very ancient and profound. It seems that every society has had some type of religious life; thus our inquiry can enable the student to understand people more easily and perhaps even appreciate the diverse beliefs of our increasingly global world. A comparative theologian will observe the practices and beliefs in our world to try and understand religious meaning. Additionally, religious impulse has inspired some of the most magnificent art, literature, and music so we will look to these fine arts to enhance our knowledge of the various cultures studied. I believe our ancestors have provided rich perspectives through which we can better define our own spiritual adventures. Whether your pursuit is academic, personal, or curious, this class will help you understand the research aids available for study in the field.

Requirements for the course:

Two textbooks: Fisher's Living Religions (any edition will do) and Van Voorst's Anthology of World Scriptures (any edition). We will be working through many of the chapters together.

Notebook/journal wherein lecture and discussion notes, group work, film notes, article reactions, charity work, and exegeses will be kept.

There will be three test opportunities and a final exam in this class. You will be graded on your knowledge of terminology, ability to exegete scripture and to write critical essay answers expressing concepts.

There will be four field trips to ecclesiastical spaces offered during the term. The student seeking an A grade will need to attend three or more field trips (50 points per trip) as well as one of their own making; the student seeking a B grade will be attending two or more field trips; and the student seeking a C grade will be attending one of the field trips.

Since this course is a "Gordon Rule" course, students must make a C or above in order to transfer the credits. In addition, all writing assignments must be turned in by the end of the term or a failing grade will be given. Therefore, late work will be accepted but it will not be eligible for comments/grades. This course will combine contract grading with traditional (e.g. 100-90 for an A; 89-80 for a B; etcetera) point averaging for quizzes and the exam.

**Attendance is important because you are essential to class! Participation in discussion and group work is a primary component of this class; in addition, much material will be covered in each class that cannot be made up (e.g. slides, films, and music examples). Attendance and participation will be noted and quizzes missed will not be given again. If absent, please get notes from other students, I will not review the contents of a missed class to any student unless it is an excused (e.g. doctor's note, family situations) absence. After three absences, each unexcused absence will cost 1/2 a letter grade—unless make-up work is completed.

GRADING:

To receive an A the student must be a scholar, i.e. present in class, successfully participating in exegesis and discussion, in attendance at three or more field trips to local ecclesiastical spaces (at least four formal trips will be taken with instructor), and earning a 90+ average on the opportunities.

To receive a B the student must be present in class, participate in exegesis and discussion, attend two or more field trips, and earn an 80+ average on the opportunities.

To receive a C the student must be present in class, participate in exegesis and discussion, attend one or more field trips, and earn a 70+ average on the opportunities.

All students are required to write 3500 words and commit 5 hours to serve the community and its needy.

Your final grade will be determined by these factors:

---500 points: 3 X 100 possible points for Testing Opportunities; 200 possible points for group project/presentation
Testing Opportunities will cover the class notes and assigned text readings and will have a term identification section, exegetical work, and then an essay section.

The date of each test can be found below in the "course outline"--Opportunity #1 takes place during the weeks of September 15th-21st; Opportunity #2 will take place during the weeks of October 20th-26th, and Opportunity #3 will be given during the week of December 1st-8th.

The final exam dates are as follows: MWF class is scheduled Monday, December 13th, 10:30-12:30. Make arrangements ahead because all students are required to sit for the 2-hour Opportunity. Monday night class takes their test on the same day, Monday, December 13th 6-8pm; and TZ class takes the final on Thursday, December 16th 10:30-12:30pm. Attendance is mandatory on testing days. Make-up quizzes will only be given in extreme circumstances and will count for only 80% of the possible 100 points.

Academic dishonesty will not be permitted. Cheating will result in expulsion from the course. A "clean" dictionary and/or thesaurus will be permitted during testing. Footnotes or endnotes must be used in papers to avoid the dishonest act of plagiarism.

---up to 300 possible points from field trip letters (50 points each), exegeses (10 points each), daily journals (up to 70 points), notebooks/attendance (30 points)...

Explained in the pages following the topic schedule.

Bonus points possible: Recitations(10-20), field trips/events(20-40), oral interview re: religious text or extra Fisher chapter (50)

GRADING SCALE: A= 1000-900 points90-100
 B= 899-800
 C= 799-700
 D= 699-600
 F= below 600 or non-withdrawal

Construction Errors Shorthand:

u.t. = titles
nsi = no split infinitives
u.s.e. = use specific examples
u.s.r. = use specific religions
¶ = use a new paragraph/paragraphs
^ = insert
= insert space
nap = no apostrophe for plurals
napo = no apostrophe for possession
napi = no apostrophe for possessive it
ucs = use complex sentences
ibeecosanw = "i" before "e" except after "c" or when sounded as "a" as in
neighbor or weigh
 = reverse letter order

REL 2300 is a "Gordon Rule" course. Therefore to receive credit for this course you must earn a C or better and you must complete the required number of 3,500 words. Thus, every writing assignment given must be fully completed. 1000 words from essay tests, ~600 re: field trip, 500 explanation/reaction to Community Service, remaining 1400 or so will come from article reactions, exegeses, term definitions, group notes and bibliography, other field trips, chapter summaries. Students will record their own word counts by putting word count at the end of each assignment.

Now is the time to find a typewriter/computer or a friend who types. Your field trip letters and formal journal assignment entries must be typed. Plan ahead to be sure papers come in by or before deadlines. Put name, date, and class time on the front page at the top of each paper handed in (no title pages please). I encourage you to utilize the back and front sides of pages to conserve. Note, please, that my schedule is such that it is difficult for me to accept any late work. However, all writing assignments must be turned in or a failing grade will be given; therefore, late work will be received by me but it will not be eligible for any comments and it will drop a letter grade each class period after the due date. All reasons for lateness must be stated in writing and handed in with the late assignment. Be sure to write name and class title and period on any late work. Daily journal may be hand-written.

For field trip thank you notes, article summaries, group project summaries and bibliographies one must find a typewriter/computer or a friend who types. Plan ahead to be sure papers come in by or before deadlines. Put name, date, and class time on the top and front page of each paper handed in (no cover pages please). I encourage you to utilize the back and front sides of pages to conserve. Late work will be received by me (since the writing requirement must be met) but it will not be eligible for any comments and it will drop a letter grade each class period after the due date. All reasons for

lateness must be stated in writing and handed in with the late assignment. Field trip letters are due within a week of attendance. Project dates will be on a sign-up sheet in class September 1st, 2nd, and 13th (for the evening class). Be sure to write name and class title and period on any late work. If you are keeping a daily journal, it may be hand-written.

Academic dishonesty will not be permitted. Cheating will result in expulsion from the course. A "clean" dictionary and/or thesaurus will be permitted during testing. Footnotes or endnotes must be used in papers to avoid the dishonest act of plagiarism.

If there are any questions regarding the course, please set up an appointment with me for a conference. My office hours are in this document at the top or posted on the door to my office. My office is in Building M, room 2242. Please call and leave a message at my office phone: 646-2360 or drop off a message at my door to set up the appointment.

In the pages following you will find the reading assignment schedule, the tentative weekly topic schedule, and the explanation of the journal. Do not lose this syllabus, as you will need it for reference throughout the term.

WEEKLY TOPIC SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

First week Introduction
 “What is Religion? Why do we have Religion?”
 Joseph Campbell and The Power of Myth (with Bill Moyers)
Read: Fisher, Chapter One, The Religious Response
Reader: Van Voorst, Chapter One, Scripture Among. . .

Second week Indigenous Ways: Oneness with Creation
Read: Fisher, Chapter Two, Indigenous Sacred Ways

Third week **First Opportunity**

Fourth week Hinduism: Beliefs and Practices
Read: Fisher, Chapter Three, Hinduism
Reader: Van Voorst, Chapter Two, Hinduism

*****Day J check in-class*****

Fifth & Sixth weeks Buddhism: Life of the Buddha, Beliefs of Buddhism
Read: Fisher, Chapter Five, Buddhism
Reader: Van Voorst, Chapter Three, Buddhism

Seventh week Buddhism: Divisions of Buddhist Religion
Read: Fisher, Chapter Five, Buddhism
Hindu/Buddhist Literature/Art/cf. Beliefs
Review Fisher, Chapters Three & Five

Eighth week Taoism: Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu: The Basics of Philosophical & Religious Taoism
Read: Fisher, Chapter 9, pp. 146-158
Reader: Van Voorst, Chapter Seven, Taoism

Ninth week **Second Opportunity**

Tenth week Judaism: Concept of G-d and Sacred History
Read: Fisher, Chapter Nine, Judaism
Reader: Van Voorst, Chapter Ten, Judaism

*****Daily Journal check in-class—possible turn-in ***** read Elie Wiesel's *Night* for extra credit

Eleventh week Judaism: Beliefs & Practices (Divisions)
Read: Fisher, Chapter Nine, Judaism
Read: Bible (NRSV) & Van Voorst, Chpt. 11

Twelfth week Christianity: Life of Jesus Christ, Beliefs
Read: Fisher, Chapter 10, Christianity

Christianity & History, Divisions of Christianity
Artistic Expressions of Christianity

All writings due

Fourteenth week Islam: Life of Mohammed, Beliefs and Practices
Read: Fisher, Chapter 11, Islam
Islam: History & Divisions; Artistic Expression
Reader: Koran. (Van Voorst, Chapter 12, Islam)

Final Exam will be at scheduled time—see above for times and dates. Schedule for finals week is college-wide.

Bonus work: Recitations of 20+verses to class or to instructor, outside pre-approved religious text and oral interview with instructor, extra field trips, extra community service, chapter summary [from the Fisher/Van Voorst texts—any chapter we have not covered together in class may be read and summarized for an assignment. (*outline or essay format; 1-3 pages; minimum 500 words*).

World Religions: An Exploration:

Your choices for directed daily journaling are below; choose three or more topics below:

Our major outside assignment this term is the keeping of a daily journal and more formal directed topics in this outline. These assignments and the journal are a type of exercise which allows the combination of academic research along with personal insight. Give word count on last page. Outside chapter summaries are possible choices as well.

TOPICS: You may wish to identify now some of the entries you want to do, although this may be subject to change as the term unfolds.

1. PERSONAL RELIGIOUS HISTORY: All of us have some ideas about religion. Where and how did we get them? Why do we call ourselves by the label "Baptist", "Catholic", "Pentecostal", "Lutheran", "Jewish", etc.? Why do we practice a

certain religion?

This entry allows you to explore your own religious background:

- a) Who were the people who influenced you the most in your religious life and in what way did they influence you?
- b) What are your earliest memories of religion?
- c) When did your religious views begin to take shape?
- d) How do you view your religious upbringing?
- e) Include anything else you wish.

*Journal entry #2 is highly recommended!!! N.B. Synagogue and Buddhist Wat visits will require 1-2pp. written reactions for quiz bonuses.

2. VISIT A RELIGIOUS SERVICE: Our study of religion is greatly benefited by the actual observance of "religion in action". This often entails visiting a church, synagogue, or other religious center.

Choose a religious service different than your background and please answer the following:

- a) When, where, and why did you attend this particular service? (Include a bulletin from the service in your entry)
- b) Discuss the format of the service. How did it unfold? What was its purpose? Did the service educate?
- b) Who was responsible for conducting the service?
- c) How did the people respond to the service?
- d) What did you learn about the religion from attending the service?
- e) What was your opinion of what you saw? Why do you hold this opinion?
- f) Include anything else you wish.

3. RELIGION AND CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS: While Religion is a very ancient discipline it still affects us in the 1990s. With this in mind scan current issues (not older than six months) of newspapers and magazines and choose some issue, event, individual, etc. who or which deal with religion.

After you have chosen your article or articles, please construct a journal entry around the following:

- a) What caused this issue, event, person, etc. to get into the news?
- b) What are the facts concerning the news item(s)?
- c) How is the item(s) presented?
- d) How much significance does society, or do you, give to this item(s)?
- e) Is there a clash of the "sacred" and "secular" here?
- f) Include anything else you wish.

4. RELIGION AND MOVIES/VIDEOS/TELEVISION/PLAYS(Outside or inside the FCCJ collection): For this assignment go to a movie, a video or TV program (OR even a live theatre performance) which has a predominately religious theme. When you have watched it write a review including the following:

- a)Who were the major characters and what actors/actresses played the major characters?
- b)What was the setting in the film: when was it supposed to have taken place and where was it supposed to have taken place?

c) Briefly summarize the plot: how was the plot developed? How well did the plot "hold together"?

d) Most importantly, what were the main religious themes of the media and how were they presented?

e) Add anything else you wish.

f) Make a statement concerning your reaction to the media. Did you like or dislike it?

5. Most students, in a semester, take more than one course. In light of this, has any material that we have studied in our religions class overlapped with what you have studied or are now studying? How would you compare the subject matter in each class? Does any of the material you are learning in one class help you get a different perspective because you are studying the subject from the vantage points of different disciplines? How does the material coincide, if at all? Does the subject matter discussed in the two different classes help you to see where a subject is "coming from"? [Please note that this entry does not ask for a teacher evaluation; the subject is the focus not the teacher(s).]

6. Has something been brought up in class that is especially interesting to you and that you would like to reflect more about? If so pursue this topic in this journal entry.

7. Scriptures: Most religions have sacred literature of some type which religious people use as a guide to life. On the third floor of our Learning Resource Center (some at the reserve desk) you will find the following sacred books:

The Bhagavad-Gita: Hinduism

The Dhammapada (The Gospel of Buddha): Buddhism

Kojiki: Shinto

Tao Te Ching: Taoism

Hebrew Bible: Judaism

Bible: Christianity

Quran: Islam

I would like you to read twenty verses from two different scriptures and then answer the following:

a) State what scriptures you read citing chapter and verse.

b) Summarize what was said in the verses you read.

c) Interpret the verses you read: what did they "say" to their readers?

d) Can you draw any comparison between the two scriptures you read?

e) Why, do you think, that the followers of these religions consider them scriptures?

f) Do the twenty verses help you understand what much of the sacred book is about?

g) Include anything else you wish.

8. PICTURES IN OUR TEXTBOOK: One reason Living Religions is our text is that

it contains a large number of illustrations (forty-five color pictures and one hundred and seventy black and white pictures). We are a visual age and if you wish to make use of the pictorial aspect of World Religions you may want to do this journal entry.

Select six pictures in our textbook (choose at least three from the chapters we are not covering as a class) and:

- a) Give your immediate impression of the pictures you have chosen.
- b) Tell how these pictures portray religion and in what sense.
- c) Discuss why you chose these particular pictures over others.
- d) Compare these pictures to the others you have chosen, if possible.
- e) Include anything else you wish.

9. INTERVIEW: Select two people (it would be good if one were clergy) who belong to two different religions or denominations. ask them the following questions:

1. Briefly, what are your basic religious beliefs?
2. How did you acquire your religious beliefs?
3. In what sense do you consider yourself religious? (Your degree of religiosity? Your religious practices?)
4. Was there a time in your life in which you were not religious? Explain.
5. Are you a convert to a particular religion? If yes, discuss the reasons for your conversion.
6. How would you describe the meaning of life?
7. What do you believe happens at death?
8. Include anything else you wish.

10. DEATH AND DYING: For many, death is an unpopular and uncomfortable aspect of human life. The reality of death and dying have been closely related, in many cases, with religion. In light of this, discuss death from the following viewpoint:

- a) Relate the death of a loved one or friend and the main emotions you felt as a result of his or her death. (An option may be to remember a funeral you attended and relate what happened there.).
- b) If you were to die what would you want to have remembered about you?
- c) If the life span of the United States were to decrease by thirty years do you think that there would be more or less religion? Explain.
- d) Choose a religion and discuss its eschatology (i.e. view of death and the endtime).
- e) Include anything else you wish.

11. THE JACKSONVILLE TELEPHONE BOOK: Obtain a recent copy of the Jacksonville Telephone Book and look at the Yellow Pages. Go to the headings "Churches", "synagogues", and "Religious Organizations". See what the Yellow Pages have to offer under these headings and then in your journal entry answer the following:

- a) What particular denomination is most represented? To what extent?(Approximately,
- b) how many telephone numbers are connected to this denomination?)
- b) Does your conclusion concerning Number One coincide with what you know about the religion of Jacksonville?
- c) What denominations come in "second" and "third" in Jacksonville?
- d) What does your foray into the telephone book tell you about the

religious beliefs of Jacksonville when the three largest denominations are considered together?

e) Are there any religions that you have not known that are represented in the Yellow Pages? List them.

f) Make a list of five religions that are only mentioned once in the telephone book.

g) What general conclusions can you draw from work on this journal entry?

Do you think Jacksonville is an average representation of religion in our country as a whole?

12. VISIT A MUSEUM/RELIGIOUS SANCTUARY: Many of the greatest masterpieces of art and architecture have been created because of religious impulse. For this to be a museum entry, you should visit the Cummer Gallery of Art in Riverside or some other gallery that displays religious art history.

Choose 3-5 works (paintings, ceramics or sculptures) that are religious in theme. Take careful notes about what you see at the museum so that you can be detailed in your entry's analysis.

a) Record your initial reactions to each work, why you chose it, etc.

b) Discuss the media represented (sculpture, painting, etc.)

c) types of materials used within each medium (e.g. oil, watercolor, mosaic, bronze, etc.)

d) style and artist(s) represented

e) which is your favorite of your choices? Why is it your favorite?

f) Note the response of other spectators. . . what are they doing?

going up close to the work? standing back from it? what are they saying about it?

g) do you feel moved by the painting? what emotions does it create in you?

h) which religion is being portrayed?

i) does the title help you understand the work? Is there a better title for it?

(BE SURE TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES FROM THE ART EXHIBIT)

If you visit an architectural structure (e.g. church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious centers) discuss:

a) original purpose for the building; is it still in use?

b) materials used; what colors are used in the sanctuary?

c) date of the building; does it belong to a particular style/period

d) name of the architect, if possible

e) can you see the influence of any surrounding buildings?

f) do you like or dislike the building? Why? Does the building create strong feelings in you?

g) does the very building the people worship in give any clue to what they believe? does their particular faith show? how so?

h) include anything else you wish. Photographs or sketches of the building would be a good addition.

14. If you would like to create a journal entry of your own please feel free to do so, but you must clear it with me first.

Please use inclusive language; that is, "he or she", "humankind" instead of "mankind". This is the proper procedure for all current scholarship and academic publications .